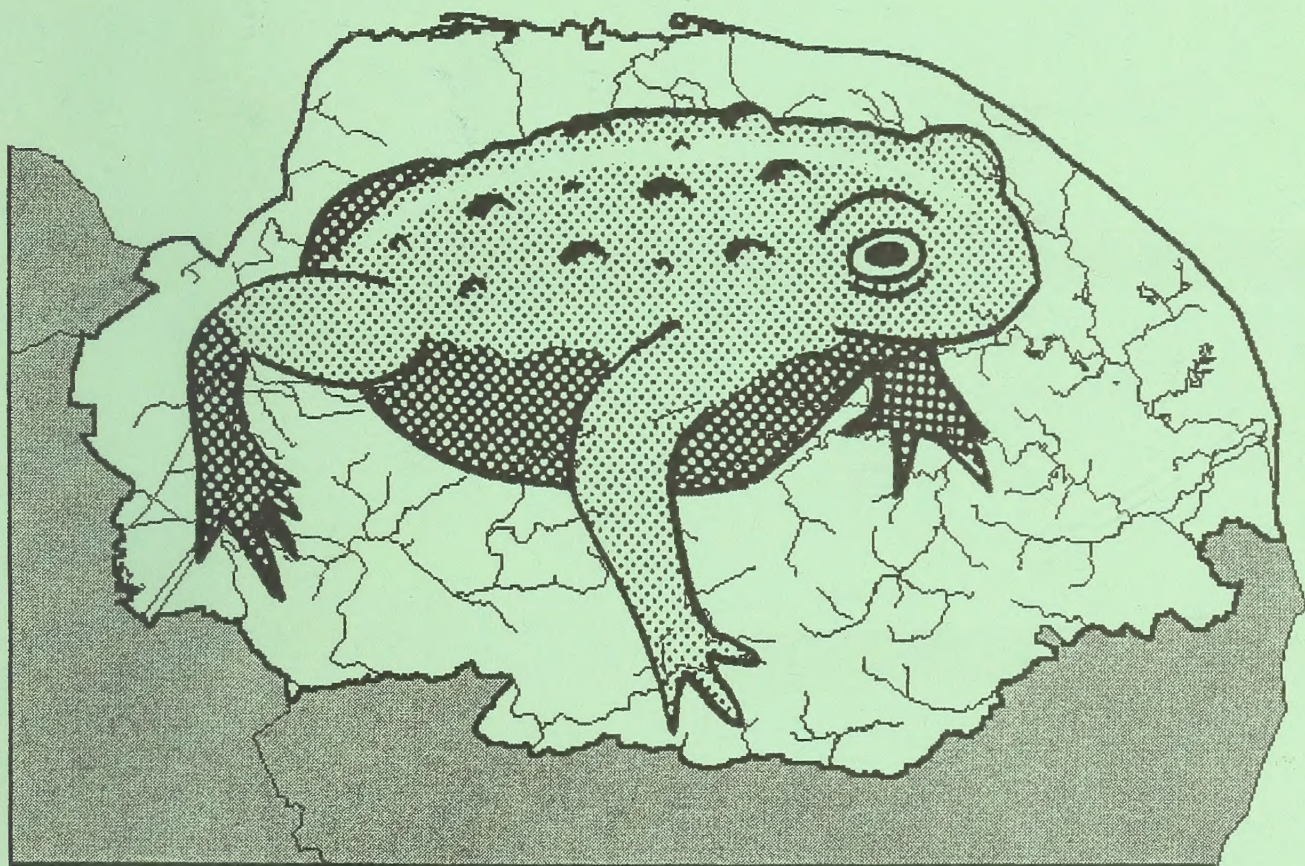


The Norfolk



Natterjack

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Articles with the camera symbol have associated photographs in the Nats' Gallery (centre pages)

Toad-in-the-hole....

This issue sees the correspondents and 'Survey Spotlight' concentrating on alien species and proposed introductions. What are your thoughts on sea eagles and the foreigners that have made their homes in our county? Many of the alien species can be seen throughout Norfolk so I hope all sightings will be sent in. Thanks again to all contributors and photographers and please continue to send your notes and observations for 2009.

FF

Ivy - Another View

Christopher Bruxner

I was very interested to read in the November 2008 Natterjack that a naturalist believes that the growth of Ivy on trees is actually deleterious to a form of wildlife, in his case the Holly Blue butterfly.

I am an 81-year old retired land agent and have had great experience in estate forestry. Over many years I have encountered Ivy growing on trees, particularly on Oak, Ash and European Larch,. In many cases, the trees have sickened, whereas the Ivy has flourished. Only the other day alongside the main Norwich to Fakenham road, while driving towards Fakenham, I noticed several Oaks in the last stages of life almost entirely smothered in Ivy. They were large trees and must have become a source of danger to users of the highway.

Ivy is certainly virulent here in North-west Norfolk and begs for attention at least annually in our village churchyard: this involves the use of axes , power-saws and strong hands. As a result, there is still a grassy sward with attractive flowers, such as the Daisy and Meadow Saxifrage (*Saxifraga granulata*).

Nowadays the Government encourages farmers to plant or replant old lines of hedges and hopefully they will weed out any invading Ivy plants., but there seems to be no pressure on them to release their hedgerow trees from the pest - the Law of Negligence even alongside highways seems to be ineffective.



Harlequin Ladybirds *Harmonia axyridis*

Doreen Wells



I was quite surprised to read David Paull's article in the November 2008 edition of Natterjack, regarding the disappearance of the Harlequin ladybird *Harmonia axyridis* and other species during 2008, because if my memory was correct I had seen Harlequins and others throughout the year at a number of locations, although not in large congregations. My computer files confirmed my recollections, so I thought that I would share the data I have.

My photographic records cover the period from early May through to the end of August, with sightings for each of those months; I did not take photos during September because of other commitments, but I do recall seeing Harlequin ladybirds during that month. I would stress that these records are only the result of indirect observations, these being incidental upon other activities such as Dragonfly recording, *Heteroptera* observations or botanising, so they cannot provide systematic proof of actual numbers. However, my most consistent records are from Strumpshaw Fen, to which I made regular visits throughout the period in question.

Date	Species	Location
10/05/08	Seven-spot ladybird, <i>Coccinella 7-punctat</i>	Great Yarmouth
14/05/08	Harlequin ladybird, <i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	New Buckenham Common
20/05/08	Cream-spot ladybird, <i>Calvia 14-guttata</i>	Strumpshaw Fen
25/05/08	Seven-spot ladybird (larva)	Beeston Common
29/05/08	Seven-spot ladybird, <i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i>	Strumpshaw Fen
30/05/08	Harlequin ladybird, <i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	Wheatfen Reserve
05/06/08	Harlequin ladybird, <i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	Strumpshaw Fen
26/06/08	Seven-spot ladybird, <i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i>	Thwaite Common
30/06/08	Seven-spot ladybird, <i>Coccinella 7-punctata</i>	Winterton NNR
16/07/08	Harlequin ladybird, <i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	Strumpshaw Fen
07/08/08	Pine ladybird, <i>Exochomus 4-pustulatus</i>	Buxton Heath
16/08/08	Harlequin ladybird, <i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	Strumpshaw Fen
21/08/08	Harlequin ladybird, <i>Harmonia axyridis</i>	Strumpshaw Fen

I have four different records of Harlequin ladybirds from Strumpshaw Fen on 21/08/08. In addition to the above, I had Seven-spot ladybirds over-wintering in my Great Yarmouth garden and they were evident throughout the season. I have included photos of four different variants of the Harlequin ladybirds



that I observed and also the Cream-spot ladybird and the Pine ladybird, the latter being a first for me. The Pine ladybird landed on my trousers when I was sitting under some trees at Buxton Heath eating my lunch.

Regarding the weather affecting insect populations during 2008, the only proof I have is the devastation caused by the torrential rain and cold spring weather of 2008 on a population of Gorse Shieldbugs *Piezodorus lituratus*, (which I had studied closely during 2007). At the time when eggs were being laid in 2008 the weather was so atrocious that they were constantly washed away. Fungal diseases seemed to be rife too with the adults. This was in stark contrast to the previous year when I had monitored their success and progress through the whole year, despite a wet summer. In 2007 we had a warm spring, with April reaching records levels.

I have no knowledge of whether ladybird populations have been affected by the very wet spring in 2008, but perhaps the Coleopterists amongst us can help me out with some comparative data.

Ladybird, Ladybird fly away home.

Adelene Clifton



In the November 2008 issue of Natterjack, David Paull mentioned the lack of ladybirds, perhaps they are all at our house!

Inside the runners of our upstairs sash windows we have always had good numbers of hibernating Two-Spots Ladybirds. In 2006 & 2007 we had one or two Harlequins join them, our first records here at Hindolveston. In early April last year, 23 two-spots emerged with 50 Harlequin Ladybirds.

We were astonished in the second week of October 2008 for 2 days to find our house seemingly covered in Harlequins. They were climbing the outside walls and swarming all over the windows upstairs. We counted 81 of which 75% was the Red form *Harmonia axyridis succinea* and 25% the black form *H. axyridis spectabilis*. There were only 12 Two-Spot Ladybirds counted among them. We will only get the true records when they emerge later this spring.

As for other sightings we saw only 2 Seven-Spot Ladybirds and 3 other Harlequins throughout the summer. We also had just one fourteen-Spot Ladybird near the garden.

So where do they go to or come from the rest of the year I don't know, but they are asleep at home at the moment!



Where have all the Harlequins gone – to Church?

Mary Ghullam

On a lovely October day a small group of lichenologists/bryologists, led by Peter Lambley, visited three of the churches in the Waveney valley: Haddiscoe, Wheatacre and Burgh St. Peter. There, basking in the sunshine, on the flint and brickwork of the latter two churches were a good number of two of the variants of the Harlequin ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*). Obviously, they, like us, enjoy an outing on a sunny day!

- to Barnham Broom?.....

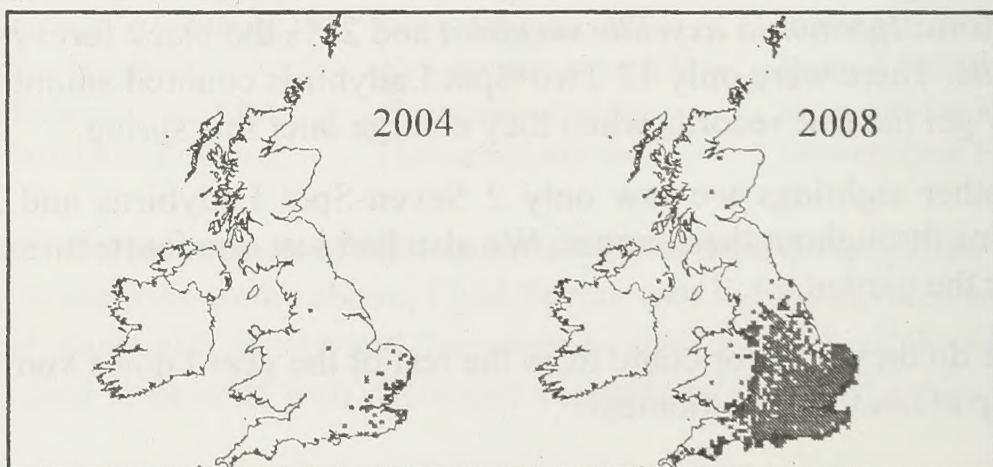
Ivor White

I have just read David Paull's article about Harlequin ladybirds. I, too, searched in vain for them in my garden at Barnham Broom. However, on Sunday, October 12, 2008, at around 4 o'clock, we noticed our west-facing cream-coloured house wall was covered with Harlequins, many flying in as we watched.

I scooped up 60+ as they crawled around the wall and windows and kept them in my "hibernaculum" (ie, margarine tub) and I'm still wondering what to do with them.

A few were still evident the next day, with none since. So, where did they come from?

The following maps show the spread of the Harlequin Ladybird within the UK from the first sightings in 2004 to the latest information in 2008. These maps and many other facts about the ladybirds can be found on the following website: www.harlequin-survey.org



Crayfish Predator

Ian Keymer

In the No.103 issue of "Natterjack", Mary Ghullam and Hatty Aldridge described Signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) remains by the Bure. I should like to suggest that these are the work of Otters rather than Mink (see photograph of White-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) remains taken by my wife Janet), in issue No.94. I have been surveying Otters on the Wissey for nearly 40 years. Otters were present there in the 1980s before their numbers were reinforced in 1991 by the introduction of two females and a male. I have only observed crayfish predation since 2002. Janet and I now have considerable experience of this sort of predation by Otters. However, we have never seen the tips of claws bitten off as observed by Martin Pugh, but will watch out for this in future.

We doubt if the remains observed by Mary Ghullam are the work of Mink, because in the area of the Wissey which we patrol, Otters have been breeding at least since their reintroduction and fortunately Mink appear to be scarce in comparison. We suggest that if Mary finds any more remains she sniffs them. If she detects the pleasant smell of jasmine tea, then Otters are responsible!

Strumpshaw in late Autumn.

Brian Macfarland



Strumpshaw nature reserve is usually my first port of call if I have a few hours to take my camera for a walk. It is 8 miles from the house, but offers the best opportunities, and variety for nature photography. I prefer to go early in the day as the wild life seems to be on the move more than in the afternoon. Having said that, there is always something to be seen at anytime.

On this particular morning I was walking along the sandy path that leads to the river, and incidentally the fen hide where I spend most of my time. I was suddenly aware of movement in the bushes on the left of the path. I moved very slowly towards a bush with rosehip berries on. At once I could see two grey squirrels delicately climbing among the flimsy branches feeding on the berries. As there was a tangled mass of branches it was difficult to get the heads clear enough to see them properly. However, after a considerable wait, and half the berries consumed I eventually got a shot. They eventually had their fill and moved on. It was the first time I had seen squirrels on that side of the path in all the years I have been going there.



I went on to spend the rest of the morning in the fen hide. Waiting is the name of the game, but eventually I was rewarded with the sight of a water rail crossing the shallow water in front of me. Because the window openings are quite high in relation to the seat height, anything that comes nearer than 20 feet make it awkward to get the camera lenses at the right angle. It is not easy to stand up a little way, and balance at the same time to tilt the lenses downwards. On this occasion I did not see the bird until he was nearly across the water into the reeds. So I managed a shot as it was walking, but slumped back onto my seat as it flew off. It all happened so quickly that I just pointed the camera in the general direction it was flying, and was pleased to see I had aimed correctly without looking through the view finder. My friends who I often share the hide with me said oh! there goes quick fire Macfarlane. (They are always taking the 'mickey' about my quick reactions, and say I'm wasting a shot.) On this occasion when they saw it in the camera they agreed it was worth trying, and felt a bit sick they hadn't gone for it!

On another occasion I was in the same hide when a beautiful double rainbow appeared, but didn't have a wide angle lens to capture the whole width. I always like the strong contrast between the rainbow and dark clouds behind. That's when a kingfisher appears at the right moment to look good in full light. Also a swan taking off just rounds off a very interesting morning. After a morning like that, one comes home with a good appetite, and to hell with the diet.

The Yare Valley



Tony Howes

As they are so close to my home I often take the camera down to either Strumpshaw, Buckenham or Acle.

There is always something worth a shot or two, maybe a water deer, either early morning or late afternoon. In particular I always look out for an old friend, 'Floppy Ear' who I first photographed in May 2004, and he has been living in the same general area at Strumpshaw ever since. Easily recognised, he has a distinctive tattered left ear, probably gained in a rutting fight.

Marsh harriers are also around most of the year, but it is spring when they come into their own, when they give amazing 'sky dances' often flying so high over the fen that they are mere dots, but their mewling calls can still clearly be heard. It is then, too, when they can be seen carrying reeds to make their nests, often from quite long distances.



Egyptian Geese are a water bird that seen to have increased in numbers in recent years, they are certainly numerous now in the Yare Valley, introduced as ornamental fowl originally they can now be seen almost everywhere.

Beeston Common Pond Clearance

Francis Farrow



With the New Year came a new look for the Newt Pond on Beeston Common. For a while now the invasive bur-reed and sweet grass have been 'marching' across the pond, trapping the silt and reducing the clear water area. It was hoped to do the pond clearance in January 2008 but the arrival of the 'Beeston Bittern' and its subsequent extended stay prevented any work.

It was early on January 2nd 2009 that a yellow Volvo EC55B digger rumbled onto the scene with my son, Ed at the controls, who under my direction as Hon. Warden, prepared to clear the pond. The work was requested by Sheringham Town Council who applied for and received a 40% pond grant from Norfolk County Council.

The marginal vegetation along the north and east banks were removed almost in their entirety. A small southern bay area was left untouched and the marginal vegetation along the western bank was reduced to a thin strip. These areas of retained vegetation will supply cover to amphibians and insects when they return in the spring prior to any re-growth occurring throughout the summer.

Once the marginal plants were taken care of Ed manoeuvred the machine into the pond (water levels having previously been lowered) to tackle the large semi-floating clumps of vegetation and to remove the silt, which had built up a considerable thickness since the last clearance. Meanwhile I tackled overhanging scrub and dug out the inlet stream to make ready for refilling the pond.

The spoil was placed on the existing spoil sites, which had been previously mown. Although not a particular pretty site at present the spoil will soon breakdown and be recovered by vegetation.

During the works a Water Shrew was spotted and towards the end of the day we were rewarded by the silent fly-past of a Barn Owl.

Once the clearance was completed and the digger had been returned the temporary dam at the head of the inlet stream was removed and the water flowed towards the pond to refill it overnight.

A full gallery of the clearance activity can be seen on the Common website at: www.beestoncommon.org.uk





In November 2008, after a tip off from a friend, I went looking for Waxwings on the old Thorpe Hospital site. I found them feeding on rose hips, but they were flying off elsewhere every now and again, presumably to drink.

By using the car as a hide I was able to get within a few yards of them and watch them closely, and also take a few photographs. Some of the birds were hawking for insects during the brighter intervals, they were perching high in the surrounding trees and making short, hovering flights from their branch to catch a passing insect, all the time emitting a soft, silvery trill call. The males were resplendent with lovely long crests.

They stayed in the same general area for about ten days before disappearing, presumably having moved on to pastures new. Beautiful, charismatic birds, it was a privilege to see them.

Species Guides on the Web

Photographic guides to the bumblebees, butterflies, dragonflies and grasshoppers of Norfolk can now be viewed on the Society's website (www.nnns.org.uk).

Click on the "species guides" header at top right of the home page to view the guides as pdf or powerpoint presentations, or to save them to your own computer to be viewed later. Saving as powerpoint presentations (for those with Microsoft office) means that the guides can be viewed at an impressive full screen size without the clutter of internet headers. (To view this way, click on the slide show icon at the bottom left in powerpoint, and use the up and down arrows to move between slides).

Bumblebees and grasshoppers include distribution maps for all species as at 31.10.08 and were produced by David Richmond, county recorder. David also compiled the butterfly and dragonfly presentations with the blessing of Andy Brazil and Pam Taylor, the county recorders for these groups.

The presentations showcase the work of the Society's photographers and amateur wildlife recorders and we are grateful for all their support in their preparation. By reaching out to a wider audience than just Society members, the guides demonstrate the public benefit of our work as a charity, a topic which is high on the agenda of the Charity Commission at the present time.



HOME BIRDS 2008

Geoffrey I. Kelly

Readers may recall that a list of birds recorded on, over or from my home at Frettenham (TG240171) during 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2006, appeared in *The Norfolk Natterjack* nos. 64, 72, 80, 88 and 96. During 2008, I again maintained a daily list, this time on 350 days (compared with 343, 343, 352, 350 and 354 in the earlier years). Blank days were as follows: two in January, three in February, two in May, three in August, one in October, four in November and one in December; there were no blank days in March, April, June, July and September.

In general, daily observations were gathered over periods of between one and six hours, two hours having been the average. The 2008 daily average was 21.4 species (compared with 20.2, 22.7, 21.6, 22.2 and 22.4 in the earlier years). In all, 69 species were noted in 2008 (likewise compared with 75, 75, 68, 72 and 71).

Twenty-four species were observed in each month. Four more species, Sparrowhawk, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull and Kestrel, 'missed-out' only in February, February again, May and October respectively.

Habitats visible from my vantage point include gardens, rough pasture, species-rich hedges, arable farmland, a mostly-wooded, worked-out chalk-pit, and the Stone Beck valley, dividing Frettenham from Spixworth and Crostwick parishes.

The first list provided is in rank, name and number of days recorded – the prefix M meaning recorded in each month. In view of the fact that I shall not be repeating this exercise (given a forthcoming move to Norwich), I have added a second list indicating the percentage of recording days for the years 1998 to 2008 inclusive each species was recorded (see page 11). While I have not previously felt the need in the aforesaid sequence of Home Bird articles to comment on the data given, re 2008 I might add that there are no inaccuracies in the figures given, particularly for House Martin, Song Thrush and House Sparrow.



Home Birds 2008 Listing

M1= Wood Pigeon 350	36 Herring Gull 48
M1= Collared Dove 350	37 Wren 41
M3 Blackbird 349	38= Sparrowhawk 40
M4 Carrion Crow 341	38= Linnet 40
M5 Magpie 340	40 Grey Heron 35
M6 Chaffinch 337	41 Red-legged Partridge 34
M7 Rook 307	42 House Sparrow 33
M8 Greenfinch 305	43 Cormorant 32
M9 Stock Dove 296	44 Song Thrush 26
M10 Blue Tit 291	45 Goldcrest 20
M11 Great Tit 275	46= Greylag Goose 9
M12 Robin 269	46= Barn Owl 9
M13 Pied Wagtail 262	46= Skylark 9
M14 Jackdaw 261	49= Mute Swan 7
15 Black-headed Gull 243	49= Teal 7
M16 Starling 235	49= House Martin 7
M17 Jay 198	52= Oystercatcher 6
18 Lesser Black-backed Gull 189	52= Bullfinch 6
19 Common Gull 186	54= Pink-footed Goose 5
M20 Dunnock 171	54= Yellowhammer 5
M21 Goldfinch 170	56 Little Owl 4
M22 Mistle Thrush 165	57= Little Egret 3
M23 Mallard 160	57= Hobby 3
24 Swallow 138	57= Blackcap 3
M25 Gt Spotted Woodpecker 120	60= Common Buzzard 2
M26 Pheasant 103	60= Cuckoo 2
27 Swift 91	60= Siskin 2
M28 Coal Tit 85	63= Canada Goose 1
29 Redwing 83	63= Marsh Harrier 1
30 Fieldfare 79	63= Common Crane 1
31 Great Black-backed Gull 69	63= Common Tern 1
32 Kestrel 58	63= Lesser Spotted Woodpecker 1
M33= Green Woodpecker 55	63= Whitethroat 1
33= Long-tailed Tit 55	63= Willow Warbler 1
35 Lapwing 52	



NATS' GALLERY: February 2009



Above: **CREAM-SPOT LADYBIRD** *Calvia 14-guttata*
and below, **PINE LADYBIRD** *Exochomus 4-pustulatus*. See article.
Photos: Doreen Wells.

HARLEQUIN LADYBIRDS *Harmonia axyridis* of four colour forms. See article. Photos: Doreen Wells.



HARLEQUIN LADYBIRDS *Harmonia axyridis* en masse at Hindolveston. See article.
Photo: Adelene Clifton.

WAXWINGS

at the old Thorpe
Hospital site,
November 2008.
The best-dressed
bird of the winter?

See article.

*Photos: Tony
Howes.*



LITTLE EGRET

An increasingly familiar
sight in Norfolk, even in the
depths of winter.

*Photo: Simon Harrap/
norfolknature.co.uk*



THE YARE VALLEY
 Egyptian Goose,
 Marsh Harrier and
 'Floppy Ear'
 (a Chinese Water Deer).
 See article.
Photos: Tony Howes.



BEESTON COMMON
POND: Before, during and
after. See article.
Photos: Francis Farrow.





FEBRUARY MAYHEM!
COMMON FROGS and
a **TOAD** on the pond on
Beeston Common.

*Photos: Simon Harrap/
norfolknature.co.uk.*





STRUMPSHAW

There is always something to see at Strumpshaw Fen. A late autumn visit produced Common Kingfisher and Grey Squirrels feasting on rose hips, as well as a serendipitous shot of a Water Rail in flight and a lucky double rainbow. See article. *Photos: Brian Macfarlane.*





***Cephaloziella* sp., Holt Lowes.** Thought to be ***C. divaricata* Common Threadwort.** Top: covering a Rabbit dropping; above: fruiting capsules (photo taken at x30); right: stem (photo taken at x100). Photos: Colin Dunster.

Home Birds 1998 - 2008 Table

YEAR	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
RECORDING DAYS/DAYS IN YEAR	343/365	343/366	352/365	350/366	354/365	350/366
AVERAGE DAILY NO OF SPECIES	20.2	22.7	21.6	22.2	22.4	21.4
ANNUAL NO OF SPECIES	75	75	68	72	71	69
	% OF RECORDING DAYS					
Mute Swan	1.5	0.6	0.9	1.1	2.6	2.0
Bewick's Swan				0.3		
Pink-Footed Goose		0.3		0.3	0.3	1.4
Greylag Goose	2.3		1.4	1.4	3.1	2.6
Canada Goose	0.6	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.8	0.3
Egyptian Goose		0.3		0.3	0.8	
Shelduck	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.3		
Teal	0.3	0.9	0.9	2.6	1.4	2.0
Mallard	11.7	16.9	24.1	20.3	36.2	45.6
Shoveler				0.6		
Red-Legged Partridge	0.3	24.2	16.5	8.6	30.6	9.7
Pheasant	30.0	30.6	8.0	10.3	27.4	29.3
Cormorant	6.7	14.9	11.9	17.7	6.2	9.1
Little Egret						0.9
Grey Heron	6.1	11.4	9.7	11.4	11.0	10.0
Marsh Harrier		0.3		0.6	0.6	0.3
Goshawk	0.3				0.6	
Sparrowhawk	6.4	9.6	14.5	16.0	15.6	11.4
Common Buzzard			0.3		0.6	0.6
Kestrel	42.0	38.8	24.4	40.3	31.1	16.5
Hobby	0.3	0.3	1.1	1.1	1.7	0.9
Moorhen			0.3			
Common Crane						0.3
Oystercatcher				0.3	0.3	1.7
Little Ringed Plover	0.3					
Golden Plover	0.3	0.3			0.3	
Lapwing	19.2	21.6	19.9	24.0	12.4	14.8
Woodcock					0.3	
Whimbrel		0.3				
Curlew	0.3					
Redshank	0.3					
Green Sandpiper		0.3				
Black-Headed Gull	76.7	81.9	73.6	65.4	65.8	69.2
Common Gull	42.0	47.2	52.6	48.6	52.3	53.0
Herring Gull	3.2	4.7	3.7	18.0	12.7	13.7
Lesser Black-Backed Gull	25.4	36.4	35.5	49.4	46.9	53.8
Great Black-Backed Gull	20.1	30.0	23.6	38.9	23.4	19.7
Common Tern		0.3				0.3
Stock Dove	94.8	93.3	89.8	93.7	97.2	84.3
Wood Pigeon	100	100	100	100	100	100
Collared Dove	95.0	96.5	100	99.7	99.7	100
Turtle Dove	28.9	20.1	11.4	16.6	0.6	
Cuckoo	4.1	4.7	4.3	1.1	0.8	0.6
Barn Owl	2.9	0.6	2.6		0.8	2.6



YEAR	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
% OF RECORDING DAYS						
Little Owl					1.7	1.1
Tawny Owl		0.9				
Swift	25.7	30.9	23.6	28.3	27.7	25.9
Kingfisher	0.3					
Green Woodpecker	25.1	37.3	10.2	15.1	6.2	15.7
Great Spotted Woodpecker	24.5	18.1	33.8	34.3	16.9	34.2
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	0.3		0.6	0.3		0.3
Skylark	17.2	21.0	11.4	8.6	3.1	2.6
Sand Martin	0.3	1.2		1.1		
Swallow	25.7	35.9	21.6	35.7	41.8	39.3
House Martin	35.9	36.7	35.8	32.9	15.3	2.0
Meadow Pipit	0.9					
Pied Wagtail	54.2	55.4	58.6	54.6	72.0	74.6
Wren	13.1	28.0	16.5	16.3	20.3	11.7
Duncock	70.3	79.6	95.2	68.0	63.8	48.7
Robin	68.8	67.8	74.4	60.9	70.1	76.6
Black Redstart			0.3		0.6	
Redstart		0.3				
Blackbird	98.5	99.7	98.9	98.6	97.2	99.7
Fieldfare	5.8	8.2	4.0	11.7	20.9	22.5
Song Thrush	20.7	27.1	25.0	34.6	15.6	7.4
Redwing	14.9	14.3	8.6	18.9	14.1	23.6
Mistle Thrush	64.7	65.9	67.0	64.3	57.3	47.0
Blackcap	4.1	6.1	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.9
Garden Warbler				0.3		
Lesser Whitethroat	1.5	0.6				
Whitethroat	1.2	12.5	2.0	3.1	0.8	0.3
Chiffchaff	1.2	1.7	0.3		0.6	
Willow Warbler	0.6	2.9	0.6	2.0		0.3
Goldcrest	2.9	2.0	2.6	5.7	0.8	5.7
Spotted Flycatcher	0.3	0.6	1.1	0.9		
Long-Tailed Tit	9.3	9.3	8.2	8.9	16.1	15.7
Blue Tit	94.2	94.5	96.6	93.1	92.1	82.9
Great Tit	82.8	91.3	88.6	85.7	87.6	78.3
Coal Tit	12.8	6.1	15.9	10.0	26.8	24.2
Marsh Tit					0.3	
Jay	46.4	58.0	57.7	38.0	37.3	56.4
Magpie	82.8	84.5	59.9	89.4	98.0	96.9
Jackdaw	11.1	48.1	50.9	56.9	60.7	74.4
Rook	62.1	67.3	63.6	82.3	84.2	87.5
Carrion Crow	19.8	82.2	83.6	92.6	93.2	97.2
Starling	99.7	100	100	100	99.2	67.0
House Sparrow	85.4	76.1	92.9	68.3	56.0	9.4
Chaffinch	93.3	89.8	98.3	96.3	94.4	96.0
Brambling		0.9				
Greenfinch	67.9	79.0	94.3	91.1	91.6	86.9
Goldfinch	24.5	19.0	15.6	14.0	22.3	48.4
Siskin	11.1		0.6	0.3		0.6
Linnet	8.5	2.0	2.6	2.0	22.6	11.4
Bullfinch	2.0	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.3	1.7
Yellowhammer	9.0	19.2	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.4
Reed Bunting	0.3	0.3		0.3		



Release of White-tailed Eagles in Norfolk

Don Dorling

(Copy of a letter sent to Natural England)

The proposal from Natural England, supported by Anglian Water and the RSPB, to attempt to establish a population of White-tailed Eagles has caused considerable debate locally. Having given the subject some thought I wrote to Natural England with my views as appended below -

"Having read some of the comments published in recent issues of the Eastern Daily Press I attended the public meeting held yesterday at the Blakeney Village Hall. I must admit to some disappointment in that I was not persuaded by the display panels or the film show to come down firmly in favour of this proposal. There was a box inviting written comments but rather than hastily scribble in the crowded room, I thought that I would prefer to 'sleep on it' before putting any thoughts on paper. I hope that I am not too late.

Bird watching has been my hobby for the past sixty years and I have certainly been thrilled to see White-tailed Eagles over this period both in Norfolk and Suffolk as well as from the re-introductions along the west coast of Scotland. So I am certainly not from the anti-raptor school of thought but I do harbour some doubts on the present proposal, which will be covered below.

1. As far as East Anglia is concerned I think that the term 'Re-introduction' is a misnomer. I have searched my literature and can only find references to rare, usually winter, occurrences in Norfolk and Suffolk. Almost all of these have been immature birds almost certainly from the Scandinavian population. If, indeed, there are very ancient 'archaeological' records, as I was told the Suffolk 'dot' on one of your maps represented, surely the whole nature of the environment has changed since those far off times.

2. In the English context as a whole, there are references to the eagle breeding in the Lake District and possibly on the Isle of Wight and Dartmoor. Of these the wilder country of the Lakes would seem to be a much better proposition for this experiment.

3. But assuming that Norfolk is chosen as a suitable location how many pairs are thought to be necessary for a viable population? Could the relatively developed coastal belt from, say, the Wash to Essex, support such a population? For example, are there sufficient large fish inshore to supplement the land based food supply?



4. What impact would these very large raptors have on important populations of harriers, bitterns, terns and waders that currently exist on the fine reserves and elsewhere along this wonderful coast? Surely such a large raptor just flying over could cause considerable disturbance to breeding grounds.

5. Can you hope to obtain the necessary support from the area's extensive and influential, agricultural and sporting interests? There is no point in releasing these magnificent birds only to find that many are, albeit illegally, shot or poisoned.

6. Finally, a considerable financial and labour commitment would be necessary to get this scheme underway and I cannot but think that such efforts could be better employed looking after some of our existing 'rarities' or if an introduction is thought worthwhile what about Ospreys in Broadland?

Sorry to appear so negative but as much as I would like to see these eagles much more regularly, I doubt if Norfolk is the right location for this experiment."

Proposed White-tailed Eagle Introduction to East Anglia

Ian Keymer

I should like to support the views expressed recently by Rex Hancy, Alec Bull, Moss Taylor and others in the Eastern Daily Press and draw the attention of other members to this extraordinary proposal.

It was with disbelief that I first heard of this plan by Natural England and the RSPB. It would be totally irresponsible. I can only assume that the idea has come from people with urban backgrounds and little personal knowledge of the countryside.

Holloway (1996) in the standard text on the history of breeding birds in the UK provides no documentary evidence that this species ever bred in East Anglia. In any case, the area has undergone considerable changes in the last three hundred years or so, many of which would bring the eagle into conflict with man, its only natural predator; *Homo sapiens* has been a predator of most animals since the stone age. The introduction of this eagle into E. Anglia would be extremely unpopular with farmers and all people associated with game rearing and shooting. The total protection of predators resulting in a marked increase in birds such as Sparrowhawks, Hen and Marsh harriers is causing considerable concern in the



countryside. Illegal shooting and poisoning of these species is not uncommon and the introduction of a predator as large as the White-tailed eagle would only encourage this practice.

Stanley, et al (1980) state that White-tailed eagles prefer a habitat of sea coasts, broad rivers and wetlands where fish and other aquatic prey are plentiful. The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads therefore provide an ideal habitat. However, for nesting, the species requires tall mature trees such as pines, beeches and oaks, also cliffs. The only cliffs of sufficient height in the proposed area of introduction are confined to N.E. Norfolk. These are mostly of shifting sand and gravel. The ledges are insufficiently stable to support the bulky nests of the species which are constructed of branches, twigs, driftwood, seaweed etc. The E. Anglian coastline has a shortage of suitable trees, these being mainly inland, including a few areas of Broadland. However, should the species find suitable nesting sites within easy reach of the coastline, it would probably plunder breeding colonies of Fulmars, gulls and terns, including the endangered Little tern. Many species of birds now have low populations, mainly due to loss of suitable habitat and will not be able to survive excessive predation.

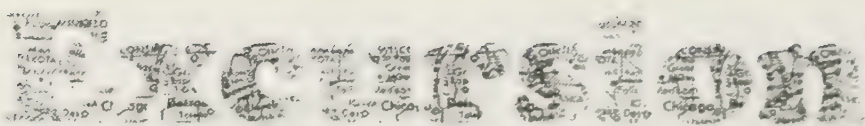
Mammal prey includes small wild mammals such as the endangered Water vole, lambs, small sheep and Red deer calves. Outdoor rearing of pigs, ducks and other poultry is now a common and widespread practice, especially in Norfolk and Suffolk. Ducks, chickens, other poultry and piglets, would therefore be very vulnerable, especially as Stanley (1980) described the eagle as a versatile hunter. Stomach analyses carried out in Norway produced 1,418 food items. Birds comprised the greater part of the diet; mainly ducks and seabirds. Sixteen species of mammals were identified comprising 13% of the diet; chiefly sheep (31.8% of all mammals) and even domestic dogs! There would therefore be a real danger to domestic pets, especially the young.

References.

Holloway, S. (1996). The Historical Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland 1875-1900.

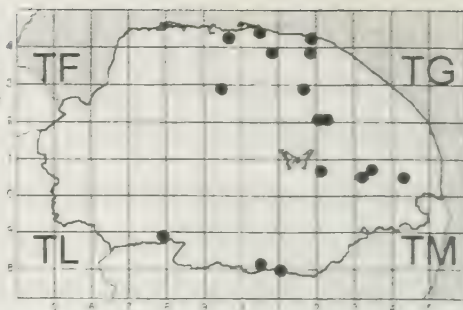
NB: The *Eastern Daily Press* reported on 29th January, 2009 that the programme for the release of the White-tailed Sea Eagles had been postponed for a year. This will enable RSPB and Natural England to consult with others and carry out further feasibility studies following numerous objections.





Reports

● 2008-09 Field
Meeting location
Easton College
Indoor meetings



Cley, for Birds

Sunday 19th October 2008

Barrie and Frances Sullivan report that 11 people met at the Visitor Centre car park to participate in this bird walk, a convenient number to avoid crowding hides unduly and being unable to hear the leader from the 'back of the line' on narrow pathways. On a day that was a little chilly and windy, but dry, the meeting went well, with nice sightings of avocets, egrets, snow buntings, a marsh harrier and a water rail, in addition to the ducks, waders etc. that one would expect to see at this venue.

Barrie has kindly led similar meetings for us previously, and members present this year found the Cley meeting equally pleasant and productive. Many thanks to him and to Frances for organising and conducting it.

Stephen Martin

Introduction to Bryophytes: Holt Lowes

Saturday 15th November 2008



A group of fifteen people (and two dogs) gathered in the small northern car park to explore the diversity of Holt Lowes. Although a large-sized group, it was decided to stick together. The primary aim of the day was to introduce beginners to the joys of 'mossing' by covering the typical common bryophytes of wide range of habitats, such as heathland, wet woodland, fen and bog. However Holt Lowes is so rich that there would be chances to see the rarer Norfolk species as well as bryophytes ranging from large species of *Sphagna* to the smallest of leafy liverworts. Some people concentrated on doing serious recording, both of bryophytes and the odd vascular plant, while others discussed the principles of bryophyte identification, differences between mosses and liverworts and illustrated equipment and useful field guides to the number of 'beginners'. Comparisons were made between typically branched pleurocarps, such as the colloquially named 'Juicy Lucy' – *Scleropodium purum* and acrocarps such as *Polytrichum formosum*, (Bank Haircap), which looks very like a miniature conifer seedling.



The thalloid liverwort, *Pellia endiviifolia*, (Endive Pellia), was soon found, but was harder to find an example of a leafy liverwort until *Chiloscyphus pallescens*, confusingly called (St Winifred's Other Moss), was discovered.

It was not long before the group had the chance to see a rarer moss, often known as 'bun moss', *Leucobryum glaucum*, (Large White-moss) and compare it with the seemingly similar but much greener and commoner *Dicranum scoparium*, (Broom Fork-moss). Then along the edge of the stream, one of the specialities of Holt Lowes, *Hookeria lucens*, (Shining Hookeria) was spotted, looking very much like a leafy liverwort, but sporting typical moss capsules. Photographs were duly taken! There was just time to point out the tomentose-stemmed *Aulocomium palustre* (Bog Groove-moss) and various *Sphagna* species, before it was time for lunch.

Over lunch, taken on a hill on the edge of heathland, differences between two of the *Campylopus* species were discussed. Growing together were the alien *C. introflexus* (Heath Star Moss) with its hair points, often in the shape of a star, and the fruiting *C. pyriformis* (Dwarf Swan-neck Moss) shedding single leaves rather than the leafy shoots of the former. Climbing up onto the heathland, it was, at last, possible to show what a typical leafy liverwort capsule looked like, as a point of comparison with moss capsules. However the one in question was tiny and only just visible above the leaves of *Cephalozia bicuspidata*, (Two-horned Pincerwort). Almost immediately two other tiny leafy liverworts were found: *Lophozia bicrenata* with its brownish gemmae and then a rabbit dropping covered in what was assumed to be *Cephaloziella divaricata*, (Common Threadwort), covered to such an extent in perianths, that it was impossible to find typical leaves. (See photo).

At the edge of the heath, at last, samples of typical epiphytic bryophytes were found growing on an Oak. These included the thalloid liverwort, *Metzgeria furcata*, (Forked Veilwort), and various cushion mosses, such as *Ulota bruchii*, (Bruch's Pincushion), and *Orthotrichum affine*, (Wood Bristle-moss). Following a path and with a brief diversion to see the very calcicole *Philonotis calcarea*, (Thick-nerved Apple-moss), it was time to sample some of the smaller mosses, often typical of arable habitats, the Bryums, including the tuberous *Bryum ruderale*, (Pea Bryum) with its purple rhizoids and the distinctive *Bryum argenteum*, (Silver-moss).

The day ended with exploration of the wettest habitats. *Campylium stellatum*, (Yellow Starry Feather-moss), unusual in not having a leaf nerve (costa), grew with *Drepanocladus cossonii*, (Intermediate Hook-moss) and the falcate *Palustriella commutata*, (Curled Hook-moss). The aptly named Greasewort, *Aneura pinguis*, was found in various states of 'frilliness' in the wettest parts. Finally, as the light was rapidly fading, there was a cornucopia of *Sphagna* hummocks, vibrant with deep red colouration: – a perfect opportunity to see the difference between *Sphagnum capillifolium* subsp. *rubellum*, (Red Bog-moss) and the larger *S. magellanicum*, (Magellanic Bog-moss).

Mary Ghullam



Moorgate Meadows, Blickling Estate

Saturday July 26th 2008

Joint NNNS and Research Committee Meeting

A small group of mainly research committee members gathered at the NT Blickling lakeside car park to explore areas of the estate, not normally accessible to members of the public. Having first sent packing the chickens, which were determined to make themselves at home in people's cars, the group split into two. The arachnologists set off, with various pieces of interesting equipment, to survey the Blickling meadows near Park Farm, while the larger group moved on to meadows in Itteringham to look for plants and insects.

The spider group, (Pip Collyer and Peter Nicholson), spent some of their time, using a petrol-driven Flymo vacuum leaf-collecting machine with a fine mesh net fitted into the mouth of the vacuum tube. This allowed them to collect invertebrates for examination from locations, which would be difficult or impossible to access by traditional methods such as grubbing around.

Most of the spiders recorded were those one would expect from a wetland site but they also found a Linyphiidae (money spider), *Lepthyphantes insignis*, [Nationally Scarce [Notable B]. This is a small, less than 3mm, pale spider, normally found in dry grassland. Recently, however, a number were found in a drainage culvert, suggesting a subterranean life style. The records from Blickling were from under the overhanging banks of two separate dykes about 300 meters apart, which would seem to confirm this idea. Spiders, inhabiting inaccessible habitats, are probably under recorded, but as so few people record spiders, that this is likely to be true of most spider species!

The Itteringham group, braving a meadow, being grazed by cattle, picked up various wetland species, such as Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*). Along the edges of the ditches, there was Greater Tussock Sedge, (*Carex paniculata*) and some small mosses, nestling in the hoof marks of the cattle or clinging on to the sides of the ditch, including *Physcomitrium pyriforme*, (Common Bladder-moss) and *Pohlia wahlenbergii*, (Pale Glaucous Thread-moss). In the slightly drier areas Oval Sedge (*Carex ovalis*) and the often-overlooked Bristle Club-rush (*Isolepis setacea*), with its ribbed nuts, were found. After crossing the Bure, the group lunched by a ditch with Monkey Flower, (*Mimulus guttatus*), growing in abundance and the sound of Kingfishers, (*Alcedo atthis*), in the background. A slightly diminished group continued to explore the ditches and meadows, admiring pristine Small Copper Butterflies (*Lycaena phaeas*) and narrowly avoiding being stung by wasps, having obviously stood on their nest by the side of a ditch. The



ditch had Common Stonewort, (*Chara vulgaris*), in it, so it was worth the effort! The day ended with the finding of a large population of the delicate Marsh Speedwell, (*Veronica scutellata*), with its pink flowers and red-tinged leaves, entwined in the tall vegetation.

Our thanks go to the National Trust for allowing us access.

Mary Ghullam

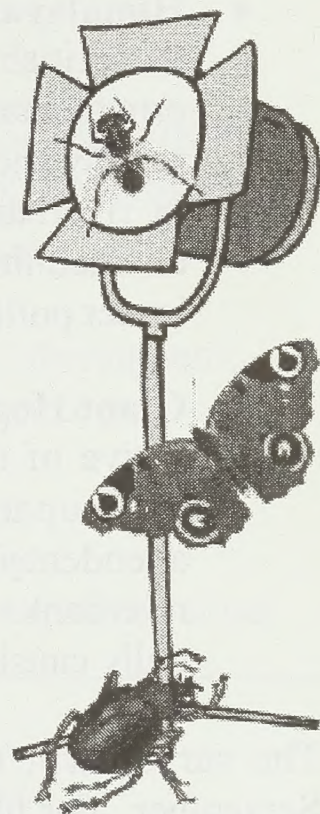
Survey Spotlight

Alien sightings wanted

Rural communities in the United States always seem to be a hotbed of alien sightings, particularly when they're located close to US Airforce bases. Not to be outdone, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, working in partnership with the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership, has launched it's own alien survey, albeit one that is less like to have the results published in the National Enquirer, for the focus is on mapping the distribution of five invasive species found in the Norfolk countryside. The aim is to engage the general public in helping to find out where these species are found and to help discover what impact they are having on our native wildlife.

So, rather than concentrating on Unidentified Flying Objects, the NWT are far more interested in sightings of the following five Identified Terrestrial Objects:

- **Reeve's Muntjac.** This small deer is native to SE China and Taiwan, first appearing in the British countryside when a population was released in woods next to Woburn Park, Bedfordshire, in 1901. Since then, the population has spread rapidly across England, probably thanks to translocations and releases as well as natural range expansion. Grazing by muntjac can seriously damage young trees.
- **American Mink.** Native to North America, Mink were imported into the UK from 1929 onwards to be bred for fur. Escapes and releases allowed populations to become established in many parts of the UK from the late 1950s. Mink can be a commercial pest, taking poultry and fish, but are also thought to have contributed to Water Vole population declines in some areas.
- **Japanese Knotweed.** This large, herbaceous perennial, native to



Japan, China and Korea, was introduced to the UK in the 19th Century. Extremely dispersive, capable of growing extremely rapidly and standing at a height of three to four metres when fully grown, knotweed can easily out-compete native plant species on riverbanks and roadsides.

- **Himalayan Balsam.** Himalayan Balsam was first introduced to the British Isles from the Himalayas in 1839, and cultivated as an ornamental garden plant. As with knotweed, its ability to grow rapidly and in dense clumps allows it to out-compete native species in riverbanks, marshes and damp woodland. It has also been claimed that the relatively large quantities of nectar produced lure insect pollinators away from other flora!
- **Giant Hogweed.** Introduced into Britain in the 19th Century, this native of the Caucasus and Central Asia is another large (it can reach up to seven metres!), fast growing herbaceous plant that has a tendency to out-compete native species, again particularly along riverbanks. An added problem is its phototoxicity, the sap potentially causing severe skin inflammations when exposed to sunlight.

The survey will run from the end of February through to the end of September. For further information or a copy of the Freepost survey form telephone 01603 598333, or visit the NWT website at the end of February and download a survey form at

www.norfolkwildlifetrust.org.uk/naturalconnections/surveys/.

Norfolk's Badgers

For those members who are not 'online' Badger records / news can be sent to the new county recorder, **John Crouch**, who can be contacted at the following address and telephone number:

**2 Chestnut Cottages, Guton Hall Lane
Brandiston, Norfolk NR10 4PH
Tel: 07850 956493**

or on-line at: **norfolkbadgers@yahoo.co.uk**





The next issue of '*The Norfolk Natterjack*' will be May 2009.
Please send all articles and notes to the editor as soon as possible by
April 1st 2009 to the following address:

Francis Farrow, 'Heathlands', 6 Havelock Road, Sheringham,
Norfolk, NR26 8QD Email: francis.f@virgin.net

Please send all photographic material to:
Simon Harrap, 1 Norwich Road, Edgefield,
Melton Constable, Norfolk, NR22 2RP Email: harrap@onetel.net

Membership subscriptions

The N&NNS membership year runs from 1st April to 31st March.
During this time members will receive four copies of the quarterly
Natterjack newsletter, and annual copies of the Transactions of the
Society, and the Norfolk Bird & Mammal Report.

Membership renewals are due on *1st April each year* and should be sent
to the treasurer:

- David Richmond, 42 Richmond Rise, Reepham, Norfolk, NR10 4LS.

New memberships should be sent to:

- David Paull, 8 Lindford Drive, Eaton, Norwich, NR4 6LT.

Current rates are £12 for individual and family memberships
(£15 for groups, £18.50 overseas).

Cheques payable to: Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society.

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